



THE MYSTERY OF THE INN BY THE SHORE



Florence Warden.
Author of "The House on the Marsh," etc.

CHAPTER XII.

Continued.

Now, there was no place to which Nell would not rather have gone than to Shingle End. For was not sentimental Miss Theodora the very cause of the outrage which had put Clifford's life in danger? If it had not been for Miss Bostal's well-meant but ill-judged encouragement, Miss Stickle's would never have dared to think he could have a chance with a girl who was so far removed from him in every way as Nell. Now, with natural feminine obstinacy, Miss Bostal would be sure to take Jem's part against Clifford, especially when it reached her ears that the latter had come down at Nell's own request. So that it was with slow, unwilling feet that Nell made her way to the colonel's house.

Everything turned out as she expected, with this exception, that Miss Bostal was so much more concerned about Jem than about Clifford that she insisted on marching off that very moment to inquire as to Jem's condition, and insisted on dragging the unwilling girl with her on the expedition.

At first Nell absolutely refused to go. But she had to give way, being touched by the self-reproach of the prim little elderly lady, who blamed herself as much for Jem's misfortune as Nell blamed herself for Clifford's.

"It was all my fault. I feel that I have brought it upon the poor fellow myself," was the burden of Miss Bostal's lament, just as it had previously been of Nell's.

She even shed tears at the thought of facing the young man upon whom she had brought more than one misfortune. For she persisted in regarding his assault upon Clifford as another grievance of Jem's rather than of the hated rival.

Nell said little as they went along. She was on the one hand deeply anxious about her lover; while on the other she hardly knew whether to laugh at Miss Bostal's extravagances or to cry sympathetically over her grief.

The little cottage where Jem lodged was soon reached. Miss Bostal's knock was answered, unexpectedly enough, by Jem in person. There seemed to be little the matter with him, except for a cut on his lower lip, the result of the blow with which Clifford had felled him. If his bodily state was sound, however, this was all that could be said for him. A more forbidding expression of sullen ferocity than that which his face wore as he recognized his visitors it would be impossible to imagine.

"Oh, so it's you, is it?" was his surly greeting, as with a scowl he made a movement to shut the door in the lady's face.

But his paternity was ready with the soft answer that turned away wrath. Pressing forward quickly and keeping Nell's hand in hers with a tight grip, she edged her way into the cottage, and, regardless of the fact that the man and woman with whom Jem lodged were present, addressed the young boor in the gentlest of voices:

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! don't send us away like that! We are so very sorry for what has happened to you. We want to know if we can do anything—"

Nell was frowning and trying to get away, indignant at the lowly tone her companion was taking. And it was upon Nell that Jem's eyes were fixed as he interrupted the other lady.

"No!" roared he. "You can't do nothing!—as yet. But, and he raised his voice and lifted his fist against an imaginary foe, as he stared harder at Nell than ever, 'I'm blest if you won't find more'n enough to do to answer the questions as 'll be put to you folks—some of you-to-morrow morning!'"

Nell suddenly ceased struggling and fixed her eyes upon Jem's swollen and excited face, in which the veins were rising like knotted cords.

"What do you mean, my dear young man?" piped Miss Bostal, in the gentlest accents, her mild efforts to calm the excited monster appearing every moment more futile and inadequate.

"Oh, you know very well what I mean, or, leastways, Miss Claris does!" pursued Jem, in the same key, and with a swaggering confidence, which caused little Miss Bostal to recoil a few steps, as if before a physical attack. "And if you don't, why you'll know soon enough. I'm just a-goin'," proceeded Jem, with sullen emphasis, "to have my pipe and my 'alf pint," and he took his beloved clay out of his pocket as he spoke, "and then I'm just a-goin' to walk over to The Bell, at Strawn to ask if a certain gentleman from Lou-on is in."

And, without further ceremony, Jem turned his back on the ladies, and marching out the room by the opposite end, through the back door, left them no alternative but to retire.

Nell was utterly disgusted, not only by the part she had been made to play in this unpleasant scene, but by her companion's humble demeanor and Jem's own rudeness. As for his threat of speaking to the detective, she seemed to be past caring whether he carried it into effect or not. She said nothing as they walked back to Shingle End, and Miss Bostal, perhaps conscious

that she had humbled herself before this young ruffian a little more than was meet, was silent also.

When they reached the house the elder lady gave a little sigh and fell back upon her usual solace in times of anxiety.

"I think we shall both feel better," she chirped, as she carefully opened the front door with her latch-key, "when we've had a cup of tea."

It was about a couple of hours after the termination of the scene between Jem Stickle and the two ladies, and the clock of the tower of St. Martin's at Strawn had just chimed a quarter past eight, when a smart boy ourst into the bar parlor of the Bell Inn, and startled the company by the scared expression of his face. He had been running fast, and it was some moments before he could articulate.

In the meantime the questions put to him were so many that the confusion of tongues delayed the lad's announcement still further.

It was Hemming, the London detective, who finally drew the boy out of the curious group and made them wait for him to speak.

"With another scared look the lad at last panted out:

"There's a man lyin' out there on the road—the Courtstairs road, a little way past the big house. An' I see him layin'—an' I speaks to 'im—an' he didn't answer, an' he didn't move. An'—an'—an' so I run right away, an' come here to tell you."

It seemed pretty evident that the boy had not said all he knew or guessed. There was a rush for the door by the occupants of the bar parlor, and in a few moments there was a stream of people trickling out in the darkness along the little quay by the little river, past the barges waiting to be unloaded, past the ancient stone gateway of Strawn's prosperous days. Over the brand-new bridge they went, in twos and threes, and out upon the flat road over the marshes, taking as their rightful leader the detective Hemming, who, being afraid that the frightened boy might give him the slip held his arm as if in kindly comradeship. The night was dark, and one of Hemming's nearest followers held a lantern, which threw a ray of dancing light to right and left upon the white road, the ditch on either side, the wide stretch of marsh to the left, and the dull line of the sea far away on the right.

Just past the "big house," a lonely mansion standing in flat, wind-swept grounds between Strawn and the sea, they came upon the man, lying, as the boy had described, by the side of the road, with his head hanging over on the grassy bank that sloped into the ditch.

"There—there he is!" whispered the boy, hoarsely.

Hemming beckoned to the man behind to bring up the lantern. Kneeling down beside the man on the ground he lifted his head and threw the light upon his face.

"It's Stickle; it's Jem Stickle!" exclaimed more than one voice, recognizing the heavy, sullen face of the fisherman, who was well known in the neighborhood.

"Here! Give him some of this; it's brandy," said one man, handing a flask to Hemming.

But the detective shook his head.

"He's had his last drink, poor chap!" said he. "He's dead!"

CHAPTER XIII.

In the little dining-room at Shingle End Miss Bostal and Nell were sitting by the fire, the latter still absorbed in thoughts of Clifford, while the former tried to divert her companion's gloomy reverie by gossip about the doings of the vicar's wife and the high price of vegetables.

Miss Bostal looked anxiously from time to time into the coal-scuttle, divided between a wish to be economical with the fuel, on the one hand, and to have a good fire ready for her father's return on the other.

"How late he is to-night!" she presently exclaimed, with an astonished glance at the clock.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and the colonel, who spent most of the day, on all week-days, either at his club at Strawn or at the golf-links, was in the habit of returning home punctually at nine.

Nell looked up with a start.

"Why, child, how scared you look! What is the matter?"

And Miss Bostal took up the tongs, and picking out from the grate the little bits of clinder which had fallen from the fire, she arranged them judiciously on the top to prevent a wasteful blaze.

"Do I?" said Nell, trying to smile, but shivering as she did so. "Well, I have had enough to scare me to-day, haven't I?"

"Oh, my dear, I shouldn't worry too much if I were you. It was a very terrible thing, and I felt bound to scold you at the time for bringing this young man down here at all. But it will be a lesson to you to be careful, and I have no doubt that both the young men will have time to think the matter over, and will make up their minds to control their passions better in future."

"But Clifford—Mr. King! I am afraid

he is seriously hurt!" whimpered Nell, with the tears, at last released, running down her cheeks.

But it was not for him that Miss Bostal spent her sympathy.

"It will be a lesson to him!" she repeated, rather frigidly.

"And Jem—he will certainly keep his word and give information to the police this time!"

"Information of what?"

"Why, of—the robbery; of what he says he saw!" said Nell, fixing anxious eyes on her friend, and dropping her voice.

Miss Bostal smiled in an amused way.

"Haven't you got over your dread of that yet? For my part, I shall be very glad when something is known. My father has been at the expense of an extra bolt on our back-door since this scare has been about; and I myself can never sleep more than an hour without jumping up with the fancy that I hear a burglar in the drawing-room underneath."

But Nell said nothing. She remained sitting in a constrained, almost awkward attitude, crouching over the fire, and throwing at her companion, from time to time, glances full of shy inquiry and of unmistakable alarm.

Miss Bostal began to regard her protegee with looks, if not of suspicion, at least of perplexity.

It was plain that the old difficulty of a maid and her lovers had begun to cast the shadow of estrangement between the friends.

There had been silence on both sides for some minutes, when, at last, the colonel's knock was heard at the front door. It had been his habit, until the news of the robbery at the Blue Lion was whispered about, to let himself into his house by simply turning the handle. But now, in common prudence, they deemed it necessary to keep the doors fastened from the inside.

With a sigh of relief Miss Bostal sprang up and hurried out to admit her father.

"Why, papa, what makes you so late? Nell has been with me, or I should have felt quite nervous."

The colonel came in with much quicker steps than usual, but he stopped short on hearing the girl's name mentioned.

"Nell!" exclaimed he. And by his manner Miss Theodora saw that something unusual had occurred. Before, however, she had time to ask any questions, he added, with a slight toss of the head: "Oh, well, the girl must hear it. Where is she?"

Nell had not moved from her seat by the fire; but she held up her head, listening. It was in this attitude that Colonel Bostal discovered her when he threw open the dining-room door and entered, followed by his daughter.

"Well, papa, what is this wonderful news?" chirped Miss Theodora, quite anxious for a little bit of gossip.

"Well it's something very serious, very dreadful, indeed. A man was found lying by the side of the road this evening, just outside Strawn, and it seems it is Jem Stickle."

"Dear dear, not intoxicated again, I hope, after all his promises?" said Miss Theodora, anxiously.

"No, poor fellow," answered her father, gravely. "He was dead."

Both his hearers uttered cries of astonishment and horror.

"But it's not possible! They must have made a mistake," urged Miss Bostal. "Why, Nell and I were talking to him a little before seven o'clock! And he was then quite well, perfectly recovered."

The colonel looked from one to the other in surprise.

"You were talking to him! Where?"

"At Mrs. Mann's cottage, where he lodged. He came to the door and spoke to us himself. He was very disagreeable and rude to us, poor fellow," said Miss Theodora, who seemed unable to grasp the fact that the man who had been so very full of life and his passions three hours before should now be lying dead.

"Ah, well, then you will both have to make your appearance as witnesses, that's certain. For there will be an inquest held to-morrow."

"As witnesses? How dreadful! Besides, what can we prove? He was quite well then."

"That's what you will have to prove. And I hope you may succeed," said the colonel, dubiously. "For if you don't, the young fellow that knocked him down and stunned him—" Nell looked up, pallid with fear—"this King, will certainly be had up for manslaughter."

Nell started up with a heartbroken cry.

"Oh, no, oh, no! How can that be possible? He had quite recovered when we saw him; Miss Theodora tells you so; Mr. and Mrs. Mann can prove it, too. He spoke just as you do. He looked just the same as ever. He must have got those afterward; everybody knows he was always getting tipsy. And he must have quarreled with some man and been thrown down, or else he must have fallen into the ditch, and been suffocated, or—"

"I don't think you ought to try to throw fresh obloquy upon the dead," said Miss Bostal, gravely. "He was quite sober when we saw him, and it must have been very little later when he died."

"But if the fall in my uncle's garden had killed him—"

"The blow, you mean," interposed Miss Bostal.

"It would have killed him at once," protested Nell. "You can't be stunned and recover entirely, and then die of the blow that stunned you an hour afterward. Is that possible, colonel?"

"I have never heard of such a case that I know of," said he, with reserve. "But I should not like to give an opinion until we have heard the doctors' evidence."

To be Continued.

PRESIDENT CASTRO BACKS OUT OF FIGHT

He Retreats From Barcelona Without Firing a Shot.

TRAINS STOPPED BY REVOLUTIONISTS.

Venezuela's President Had Declared He Would Fight One Against Ten, but Quickly Changed His Mind When He Found the Revolutionists Intrenched and Waiting for Him—Retreat Disastrous to Government.

Willemstad (By Cable).—President Castro, of Venezuela, has returned to Caracas from Barcelona, owing to the impossibility for him with his army of 3,000 men to attack the revolutionists waiting for him entrenched at Aragua, capital of the State of Guzman Blanco. He left without firing a single shot, notwithstanding his proclamation in which he said he would fight one against ten. The moral effect produced by his retreat is disastrous for the government, and gives an idea of the strangest of revolutions which lately has spread towards the center of Venezuela. The revolutionists are at Chaguaramas on their way to Ortuco, 60 miles from Caracas.

President Castro's new plan is to attack the revolutionists near Valencia, where they are assembling from all directions. General Riera, with 1,800 men being on their way there from Coro. General Solaguer with 700 men is marching to the rendezvous from San Felipe; General Mendoza with 1,000 men, and General Matos, leader of the revolution, accompanied by General Monagas and large forces of revolutionists, is also headed for that vicinity.

The government of President Castro cannot hold out much longer. Funds are needed and forced loans are being resorted to. Trains on the Caracas Railroad are being held up daily by the revolutionists.

Foreign Warships Salute Castro. Washington (Special).—The Navy Department has received the following cablegram from Commander McLean, of the Cincinnati, the senior American naval officer in Venezuelan waters, dated La Guira:

"The president of Venezuela arrived here with flag on Restaurador. Was saluted by all the foreign men-of-war and by battery ashore. He has proceeded to Caracas, Ven., with troops by rail. Intends to march on revolutionary force. Trains have been interrupted by revolutionists. They were driven away by Venezuelan soldiers. The Venezuelan government holds Valencia."

TRAIN ROBBERS GET \$50,000. Daring Hold-Up of a Mexican Central Train By Americans.

El Paso, Texas (Special).—A daring hold-up occurred on the Mexican Central Railroad about 12.30 o'clock the other morning, just after the train left Bernillo.

Three Americans boarded the train at Bernillo, two secreting themselves on the blind baggage and the other entering the third-class coach. As soon as the train pulled out the two riding on the outside entered the express car and covering Messenger Buckner with their guns ordered him to throw up his hands. The messenger offered no resistance. The robbers then went leisurely through the safe, securing \$50,000 in currency consigned to the Banco Minero at Chihuahua. They also took what other money packages were in the safe and remained quiet until the train slowed, making a hasty exit and dropping off the train before it stopped. They then disappeared into the darkness.

About the time the robbers entered the express car the conductor of the train became engaged in an altercation with a passenger, who refused to pay his fare. Finally the conductor had the train stopped and the passenger was ejected. The robbers alighted at the same time. It is now believed the troublesome passenger was a partner of the robbers and that his actions were a ruse to secure the stoppage of the train.

Lived With Pierced Heart. Baltimore, Md. (Special).—Coroner Baldwin investigated the death of Mrs. Cecelia M. Sullivan, who died at the Maryland Homeopathic Hospital from pistol shot wounds self-inflicted. Dr. E. J. Walton made an autopsy of the body, which revealed the remarkable fact that Mrs. Sullivan had lived about eighteen hours, part of the time conscious, with one bullet wound through the heart and another that penetrated the stomach, liver and spleen. The other bullet grazed the heart. One bullet was found loose in the lining of the heart, one lodged in the back between the ribs and the other in the muscles of the back.

A Hermit For Thirty Years. Port Jervis, N. Y. (Special).—Col. John F. Lord died suddenly at the age of 85 years at Rio, N. Y., about 10 miles west of this place. For 30 years he lived the life of a hermit, until one night a few years ago his cabin was burned. When he sought shelter in the cottage of John Dougherty, the Rio postmaster, he revealed the remarkable fact that Mrs. Sullivan had lived about eighteen hours, part of the time conscious, with one bullet wound through the heart and another that penetrated the stomach, liver and spleen. The other bullet grazed the heart. One bullet was found loose in the lining of the heart, one lodged in the back between the ribs and the other in the muscles of the back.

When prices of all securities move upward steadily it proves that the country still has confidence in itself and its immediate business future.

Gould is said to be the purchaser of the Old Dominion Railway system of Portsmouth, although the Williams Syndicate may have a hand in it.

Susquehanna Steel & Iron is \$5 a share and sells for around \$2.75. It pays 6 per cent. dividend and the fact that it is opposing President Porter's policy declares it might earn 12 per cent.

SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS.

Domestic.

Etta Cook, a young orphan girl, of Branford, Conn., in love with a Yale student, committed suicide upon learning that he was about to return to his Southern home.

The steam yacht Felicia arrived at New York with the crew of the schooner Druid, which was sunk by the Felicia off Little Gull Island.

Najib Hashim, manager of the Grand Opera House in Philadelphia, was accused by Mrs. Constance Biddle of pawnbroking her jewels.

Robert Ridgeway and David Weaver fought a duel with knives on Back Creek, Va., and Weaver was fatally injured.

The arbitrators granted part of the demands of the employees of the Chicago City Railway Company.

Fitzhugh Wingfield, of Richmond, Va., fell from a freight train near Fredericksburg and was killed.

Lightning and a deluge of rain caused considerable damage in Philadelphia and vicinity. The lightning struck the James Murray & Co. flint-glass factory, causing a loss of \$50,000. A benzine tank at Point Breeze was also fired by lightning.

At a special meeting of the board of directors of the Commercial Cable Company in New York a series of resolutions on the death of John W. Mackay were adopted.

Superintendent Robinson, of the Klondike section, testified that the officials knew that gas was in the mines, but every precaution was taken to prevent accident.

Trinidad, Col., is suffering from a water famine. The city is without fire protection and water for domestic purposes has to be purchased by the bucket.

Mayor Ashbridge, of Philadelphia, vetoed the ordinance for the purchase of Pettys Island and the "cannon-ball" farm.

One fireman was killed and several were injured in a fire that broke out in the market building at Albany, N. Y.

The heavy rains of the past seven days in the western part of Texas have caused considerable damage.

One man was killed and three wounded in a shooting affray at Greenville, Miss.

Six men were hanged in Arkansas for murder. Two of the number were white.

President Roosevelt was given an enthusiastic reception by the people of New Jersey on his visit to the State camp at Sea Girt. The Presidential party landed from the yacht Mayflower at the Atlantic Highlands and crowds greeted him at all the seaside resort stations. He delivered an address full of good advice to the soldiers at Sea Girt.

Judge Jackson, at Parkersburg, W. Va., in a decision on the "Mother" Jones contempt cases, declared that all of the defendants had violated the injunction. President Mitchell, of the United Mine workers, says a protest against the Judge's decision will be laid before President Roosevelt.

J. R. Greenway, the missing cashier of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway at Norfolk, Va., who disappeared from Richmond, was found with a self-inflicted wound in the throat. He had become insane from the coca-cola habit.

Foreign.

The Irish land war is becoming serious, owing to the discovery of secret documents of the land trust organized by the landlords for resisting the threatening combination of tenants. John Redmond and other Irish leaders say they will not be surprised if they are arrested.

King Edward held a meeting of the Privy Council on board the royal yacht the first meeting of the kind ever held in a similar place or under such circumstances. The King signed proclamations fixing the coronation for August 9.

The closing of the unauthorized religious schools in Paris is not causing as much trouble as in other parts of the country. At Manvaux the expulsion of the sisters led to a riot. A police commissary and to rioters were injured.

The Canadian Pacific's tender to supply a fast transatlantic line, to be subsidized by the British and Canadian Governments, made a favorable impression in London.

Gen. Lucas Meyer, former commander of the Orange Free State, arrived in England, and will go to Dresden, where his wife and daughter are.

Paderewski, the pianist, is a large subscriber to the Bank of Ziemi, organized at Posen to counteract the Germanization of the province.

An announcement from Montreal that the Canadian Pacific Railroad had offered to establish a weekly steamship service between Canada and Liverpool has caused a stir in England, the action being regarded as an offset to Morgan's combine.

In the British House of Commons a motion offered by John Clancy that the overtaxation of Ireland constitutes a pressing grievance was defeated by a vote of 168 to 117.

It is reported in a London review that the Marquis Luigi Solari, of Italy, and not Marconi, was the real inventor of the wireless telegraph system.

Advices from Caracas state that business in Venezuela is paralyzed because of the prolonged revolution and the spread of yellow fever and typhoid.

Cheering crowds held up Lord Kitchener's cab in London and gave the war hero such a riotous demonstration that he had to be rescued by the police.

Planters on the larger West Indian Islands, states a dispatch from Kingston, Jamaica, are talking of annexation to the United States.

Second Lieut. C. D. Gregson, of the Second Life Guards, King Edward's crack regiment, although popular with his men and an efficient officer, has been shamefully treated by his brother officers because they did not consider him their social equal.

Financial.

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FEEDING A VOLCANO

Curious Superstition of Inhabitants of a Small South American State.